

2015 AmeriCorps State & National: Review (Scoring) Rubric and Criterion Descriptions

The 2015 AmeriCorps State & National External Review will use a 4-point **Review Rubric Rating Scale** to assess this year's Selection Criteria. For each rating, the corresponding description details the characteristics of the quality of an application's response within that particular rating. Reviewers should consider the application's characteristics to determine which rating is most appropriate for each criterion, then indicate this using the drop-down boxes within the electronic Individual Review Form.

As covered in the Orientation Sessions, the Past Performance criterion does not use the Rating Scale below.

Reviewers should also consider the Criterion Descriptions, included on pages 2-6. The Criterion Descriptions are divided into two sections: **Program Design Criterion Descriptions** and the **Past Performance Criterion Descriptions**. The Program Design Criterion Descriptions provide specific examples of the "Exceeds the criterion" and "Does not meet the criterion" ratings for each criterion. The Past Performance Criterion Descriptions itemize its specific ratings and the corresponding description for each.

Review Rubric Rating Scale	
Rating	Description
Exceeds the criterion	Quality response, meeting all aspects of the criterion, and exceeding most aspects of the criterion. Strengths are substantial. Weaknesses are absent or minimal in effect on the overall quality of the response.
Meets the criterion	Acceptable response, meeting all or most aspects of the criterion. Strengths and weaknesses may both be present, but strengths outweigh weaknesses in significance. Overall quality of response is satisfactory, with room for improvement.
Partially meets the criterion	Low quality response, meeting some aspects of the criterion but not satisfactorily addressing other significant aspects of the criterion. Weaknesses are greater in significance than strengths. Overall quality of response is lacking with room for assumptions in key elements.
Does not meet the criterion	Very weak response, neglecting to address or failing to satisfactorily address all or most aspects of the criterion. Strengths are absent or are minimal in effect. Overall quality of response is inadequate, with significant flaws in addressing the criterion.

Program Design Criterion Descriptions

Criterion	Exceeds the Criterion	Does Not Meet the Criterion
	Quality response, meeting all aspects of the standard, and exceeding some aspects of the standard. Strengths are substantial. Weaknesses are absent or are minimal in effect on the overall quality of the response.	Very weak response, neglecting to address or failing to satisfactorily address all or most aspects of the standard. Strengths are absent or are minimal in effect. Overall quality of response is inadequate, with significant flaws in addressing the standard.
The applicant clearly describes how the community problem/need will be addressed by the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is clear which exact problem(s)/need(s) the program will address in the target community • The intervention (activity) is logically connected to the problem/need • The applicant explains why the problem exists and how the intervention will address the causes of the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant provides little or no detail about the problem(s)/need(s) in the community • The applicant talks about a lot of problems faced by the community (“spaghetti-on-the-wall” approach), but it is not clear which of these problems will actually be addressed by the program • The need/problem described by the applicant is not clearly related to the proposed program activities • The causes of the problem are not clearly explained or will not be adequately addressed by the proposed activities
The community need/problem is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and the need has been well documented with relevant data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application includes specific, relevant, up-to-date data from reputable sources that document the need(s)/problem(s) that the program plans to address • The data make a compelling case that the problem is widespread and/or severe in the target community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application does not include sufficient data to substantiate the need, or the data are out of date or from a questionable source (or the source is not cited at all.) • The data cited in the application do not directly relate to the problem/need (e.g., the applicant described the problem as low childhood literacy but cited statistics on the unemployment rate. • The data are not pertinent to the actual target community where the program will serve (e.g., they are from a different state or region.) • The data do not make a compelling case about the severity of the problem/need

The applicant clearly describes the proposed intervention including the roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is clear what the activities of the AmeriCorps members will look like and how they fit into the overall program design • If volunteers recruited/supported by AmeriCorps members will play an important role in the core activities of the program, the volunteers' roles and activities are clearly explained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult to tell from the application what the AmeriCorps members will actually do (or, if leveraged volunteers will play a key role in implementing the program, what the volunteers' activities will be)
The intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a logical cause-and-effect relationship between the AmeriCorps member activities and the outcomes described in the applicant's logic model and application narrative • The evidence presented by the applicant (research studies, program evaluations and/or past performance measure data) makes a compelling case that the members' activities are likely to be effective in achieving the desired outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The AmeriCorps members' activities do not appear to have a logical cause and effect relationship with the desired outcomes • The evidence presented by the applicant does not make a convincing case that AmeriCorps member activities are likely to result in the desired outcomes (the research studies/program evaluations/performance measure data may be irrelevant or from a questionable source, or may not have been provided at all)
The AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AmeriCorps members will provide clear value-add to the target community by providing service that would not otherwise be available, and/or by enhancing existing services • AmeriCorps members' service activities are distinct from those of existing staff and/or volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AmeriCorps member service will be duplicating roles or activities that already exist in the community or in the applicant organization • AmeriCorps members will displace existing staff and/or volunteers
All elements of the logic model are logically aligned. (NOTE: this criterion does not have an "exceeds standards" option, so the description in the first column is for a "meets standards" rating)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "flow" of the logic model makes sense: the problem/need is directly connected to the proposed intervention, and the intervention is directly connected to the desired outputs and outcomes • The logic model tells a coherent story about what the program will do and what it plans to accomplish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The logic model is incoherent or hard to follow • The pieces of the logic model (problem, intervention, outputs and outcomes) do not appear to be directly related to each other or contain questionable leaps/assumptions
Members will receive high quality training to provide effective service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training plan includes all the specific content the member will need for his/her particular service assignment, plus training about AmeriCorps-specific requirements • Training will be provided by individuals with the appropriate subject-matter expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training topics are inadequate or inappropriate for the service assignment • It is not clear who will provide the training to members, or the training will be done by individuals without the necessary subject matter expertise

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of time allotted for training is of sufficient duration and intensity to cover all of the proposed topics • Training is continued and/or reinforced throughout the service term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough time is provided to cover all the necessary training topics • Training is a “one-shot-wonder” that is not reinforced or continued throughout the service term
Members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to, the rules including prohibited activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application includes a thorough plan for training both members and volunteers about prohibited activities • Training on prohibited activities is reinforced throughout the service term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant’s plan for training members and volunteers about prohibited activities is incomplete or absent • Training is a “one-shot wonder” that is not reinforced or continued throughout the service term
Members will receive high quality guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors will have frequent and meaningful interactions with AmeriCorps members • The type of support provided to AmeriCorps members by their supervisors is clearly described and is appropriate for the type of service the members will perform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not clear how much interaction AmeriCorps members will have with their supervisors, or if the level of interaction is inadequate or superficial • The type of support provided by supervisors is not well described or is not well suited for the type of service the member will perform
Supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear and detailed plan for training member supervisors in AmeriCorps requirements, including requirements around prohibited activities • The amount of time allocated for training is of sufficient duration and intensity to cover all of the necessary topics • Training is continued and/or reinforced throughout the program year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The training topics are incomplete or inappropriate for member supervisors • Not enough time is provided to cover all the necessary training topics • Training is not reinforced or continued throughout the program year
AmeriCorps members will gain skills and experience as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application describes the specific skills and experience that members will gain and makes it clear how they will emerge from the members’ training and service activities • It is clear how the skills and experience will be relevant and valuable to future employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skills and experience the member will gain are not sufficiently described and/or are not logically connected to the training plan and service activities
AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences and opportunities for reflection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is clear how the service experience will be meaningful for members • Reflection is an intentional part of the member service experience and is woven throughout the term of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the service experience does not seem like it will be meaningful for members, or the applicant does not explain how it will be meaningful • Reflection is incorporated poorly or not at all into the members’ service terms

<p>AmeriCorps members will have opportunities to establish connections with each other and the broader National Service network to build esprit de corps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for members to interact and establish connections with other members in their program cohort are an intentional part of the program design and extend throughout the term of service • Members will have meaningful interactions with members and/or volunteers from other national service programs such as AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC, and/or Senior Corps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not clear whether members will have opportunities to interact with fellow AmeriCorps members in their cohort, or the interactions are limited and/or not meaningful • Members will not be connected with other national service program members or volunteers
<p>AmeriCorps members will develop an ethic of and skills for active and productive citizenship and will be encouraged to continue to engage in public and community service after their AmeriCorps term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of citizenship skills and ethic among AmeriCorps members is a meaningful and intentional part of the program design and/or the member training plan • It is clear how the program will encourage members to continue to engage in public and community service beyond their current service terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant does not sufficiently explain whether, or how, the program will encourage active citizenship and civic engagement among AmeriCorps members, either during the term of service or beyond
<p>The program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the communities in which the programs operate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has a detailed and intentional plan to recruit members from the target communities where the program will operate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant does not articulate a plan to recruit members from the local communities where the program will operate, or the plan is vague or unrealistic

Past Performance Criterion Descriptions

Criterion	Met all performance measurement targets.	Did not meet all performance measurement targets, but has an adequate corrective action plan.	Did not meet all performance measurement targets. Corrective action plan is inadequate or not present.	Did not provide a response.
The applicant clearly describes how it has met performance measurement targets during the last three years of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.	Select this option if the applicant describes meeting all of their output and outcome targets during the last full year of program operations (or more)	Select this option if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the applicant indicates that the program has not met one or more output or outcome targets during its most recent full year of program operations, AND the applicant provides a realistic, detailed, and well-conceived description of steps the program will take to meet its performance measure targets moving forward. 	Select this option if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the applicant indicates that the program has not met one or more output or outcome targets during its most recent full year of program operations, AND the applicant either does not describe any steps the program will take to meet its performance measure targets moving forward, or the proposed steps are unrealistic, poorly conceived, or inadequately described. 	Select this option if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant did not provide any information about performance measures in the Past Performance section of the application, OR The Past Performance section is completely absent from the application